

CALHOUN COUNTY

Honorable Jack W. Hughes

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Council Priorities

1. Parenting skills

Parenting programs will be expanded geared toward reducing juvenile delinquency and crime.

2. Improve school readiness

Implement Blue Print for School Readiness and advocate for state funded pre-kindergarten.

3. Substance abuse prevention

Continue to support community prevention efforts through coordination and supporting adequate funding.

Issues

Issues are the primary concerns or problems facing children in the county

Early Care Education

Children (0 – 5) are provided opportunities to fully develop emotionally, socially, physically, and cognitively and are ready to succeed.

Improve access to quality day care

Action Steps

- 1) Develop and implement a voluntary day care rating and training system for day care providers and parents living in the city of Anniston.
- 2) Survey existing services and based on the needs identified, offer technical assistance and training to improve the quality of available child care.
- 3) Continue the work of the Anniston Birth to Five Community Planning Group.

Improve school readiness

Action Steps

- 1) Implement Blue Print for School Readiness developed by the Birth to Five Planning Group and the Alabama Partnership for Children.
- 2) Further identify data needed in the development of effective school readiness services.
- 3) Partner with Pre-K now to advocate for state funded pre-kindergarten for children ages 4 and 5.

Economic Security

Children grow up in a financially stable home where the child's basic needs can be met.

Reduced child poverty

Action Steps

- 1) Identify and utilize "Ready Communities" indicators including: poverty rates of children in Anniston, high rate of female led households, lack of High School Diploma, high numbers of families living in isolation due to poverty and high divorce rates.
- 2) Each of these indicators will be tracked and the data will be used in program development, service collaboration and identifying priority funding needs.
- 3) Identify gaps in services, such as GED programs, job development programs, job readiness, and job placement services.

Education

Children learn the skills necessary to become productive citizens.

High school graduation

Action Steps

- 1) Increase the High School graduation rate for school systems in Calhoun County.
- 2) Continue to provide support to parents through programs addressing risky youth behavior and effective parenting skills.
- 3) Continue collaboration among educators, the local business community and citizens at large to provide mentoring and after school programs.

Local school funding

Action Steps

- 1) Educate the community regarding the disproportionately low tax support per student, as compared to the state and nation.
- 2) Advocate for an increase in mileage rates in each of the county and cities in Calhoun County.

Health

Children's (0 - 19) physical and mental well-being in the county.

Childhood asthma

Action Steps

- 1) Educate parents regarding the dangers of second hand smoke.
- 2) Collaborate to provide smoking cessation programs for parents.
- 3) Connect parents with Community resources, such as the American Cancer Society.
- 4) Partner with the Calhoun Coalition against Tobacco to connect with pediatricians to help advocate tobacco control.
- 5) Help strengthen public policy for clean indoor air.

Teen substance abuse treatment

Action Steps

- 1) Educate the public regarding the critical need for substance abuse treatment services in Calhoun County.
- 2) Increase the number of teens who receive or have access to substance abuse treatment.
- 3) Continue to provide strong funding for newly created teen drug court.

Substance abuse prevention

Action Steps

- 1) Continue community coalition efforts to reduce substance abuse.
- 2) Continue to support community prevention efforts through strong evaluation, collaboration, and adequate funding.
- 3) Continue to provide researched based, age appropriate, prevention curricula for children, ages 6-12.

Parent Involvement Skills

Parents and guardians participation and effectiveness in fostering an environment for children to become mature, responsible and independent adults.

Child development

Action Steps

- 1) Continue and expand the collaborative implementation of Parents as Teachers for parents in Calhoun County especially targeting the City of Anniston.
- 2) Develop and implement a home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) program for parents in Anniston (Federal grant application submitted).
- 3) Continue collaborative efforts to provide developmental screenings to all children and make appropriate referrals.

Parenting skills

Action Steps

- 1) Continue and expand local Parent Project Jr. and Parent Project Senior to empower parents to effectively influence their child to make safe choices.
- 2) Continue and expand support groups and program for parents to help alleviate the growing rate of juvenile delinquency and crime.
- 3) Continue to support all local parent education and involvement efforts by schools and local agencies.

Safety

Children live free of abuse, neglect, crime, and drugs.

Child abuse prevention/intervention

Action Steps

- 1) Continue community education efforts, including school based programs, to help citizens identify and report child abuse.
- 2) Track child abuse and neglect reports and use data to reduce the number of repeat offenders.
- 3) Continue to provide comprehensive counseling services to victims and families.

Child restraint usage

Action Steps

- 1) Educate the public regarding the new child restraint law effective July 1, 2006.
- 2) Continue to assist families in selecting and utilizing appropriate child safety seats.
- 3) Continue to make free child safety seats available for families in need.

Policy Recommendations

- Advocate for funding for comprehensive Pre-K program.
- Advocate for increase in tax mileage for local schools.
- Advocate for additional subsidized day care slots in licensed facilities.
- Advocate for Clean Indoor Air Policy among local municipalities.